1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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A little later they collect *kapani*, the wild bearded rice common in all old rice fields and fallows and at the edges of standing water, by holding a winnowing-fan in one hand and beating the grain of the standing ripe plants into it with the other; the bearded ears are sometimes plaited into '*sela*' fringes for ornamenting doors of houses at the new-eating festivals.

The men are adept in collecting the honey of various kinds of bees, though sometimes, despite forest rules, too prone to save trouble by felling rather than climbing a fine tree. For this purpose, and for tapping palm trees, they often fasten to the trunks of trees long thick bamboos, cutting the side shoots down to stumps four or five inches long to serve as ladder rungs. Gums are collected from many species of trees, for use as bird-lime or in securing the *kosa* silk whipping of arrow-heads, etc. In Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils the Forest Department has quantities of *tasar* silk cocoons collected by Bison-horn Maria men when, in the rains in the intervals between sowing and reaping their various crops, they go out to the forests in search of such delicacies as red ants' nests, ant-eaters, rats, squirrels and grubs. The cocoons are high on sal or *saja* trees; where the climbers cannot reach them they use long bamboo poles with a piece of bamboo fastened at an acute angle at the end to serve as a hook. They get about Rs. 3 a thousand cocoons from the Koshta weavers who employ them; the Hill Maria, however, generally collects only what cocoons he needs for his own purposes. Red ants' nests are cooked, leaves, ants and all, either with *pej* or *gato*, or by themselves and eaten with pulses as a vegetable. They are also a favourite febrifuge; a rough and ready remedy is to shake out the live red ants on to the patient's skull, when the formic acid of their stings is said to reduce the fever; the more elaborate method is to boil the nest, ants and all, and to strain off and use the juice as a febrifuge in small doses; this juice is said to taste sharper than any lime and believed to be invaluable for a long-standing fever. In collecting the palms of the dwarf palms *chhind* (*Phoenix sylvestris*), *P. acaulis*, and *buta chhind* (*P. farinifera*) for use for thatching, basketry or making rough cords for binding fences, the men not only collect the small dates or the flowers (according to season) and the edible pith of the *buta chhind*, but also the fat white grub of a certain beetle, which is also found in the stems of the toddy palm and in fresh green monsoon bamboo shoots. This is eaten fried in ghee or oil with a little spice and chillies, and is regarded as a great delicacy; it is sold in the Jagdalpur market for three or four pice, and even high-caste Hindus buy it. When white ants emerge in flying swarms early in the monsoon they collect them after they have shed their wings, or pull the wings

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the seeds are small, shiny and scarlet, with black eyes, and are used as beads in Bastar and many parts of the Central Provinces. For poisoning tiger they 'salt' the flesh of a kill with the poisonous leaves, bark and roots of the shrub *dual bito* (Halbi *bag mohra*; *Alstonia neriifolia*) mixed with quicklime.

C. *Domestication of Animals*

Pigs

Pork is a major item in the dietary of Hill and Bison-horn Marias. At the end of marches in the Abujhmar hills I always paid for a pig for the carriers from the preceding camp to roast and eat before dispersing to their villages; and it is sound to provide the Marias or Murias called out for any State work with pork at the beginning and end of the work. The best fattened hog[1] is very cheap and goes a long way. The housing and feeding of pigs have already been described[2]; cared for in this way, even the domestic India pig is not necessarily the foul worm-ridden pest that he becomes in the low caste quarters of the towns and villages of British India, and in fact in Abujhmar villages his quarters are often cleaner than the houses.

Nearly all young boars are gelded, but a few are left entire for sacrifices in honour of the clan-god and the Village Mother to whom neither Hill nor Bison-horn Maria would offer a hog. The Hill Maria lays the boar on its back, ties its front legs to a post, and stretches out its back legs, while another draws out its penis (*dim*) and crushes its testicles (*merrsheng*) with stones. They say that gelding improves the flavour of pork, and the only boars ever eaten are those sacrificed. A hog is always part of the Hill Maria bride-price. Hill Marias call a hog *badiali padi* or *kuna padi*, and Bison-horn *badiali padi*; boars they respectively call *charkal padi* and *kural padi*.

Cooked pig's lard is kept in many Hill Maria houses as a salve for sore eyes and cuts.

Poultry

They keep numbers of poultry similar in breed and appearance to the red jungle fowl. The Hill Maria's hen-coops have been described on page 104. Cocks and hens are taken to the field houses, and roost there below the sleeping platforms. *Kovr-guda*, funnel-shaped nests on bamboo posts about two feet high, are kept in every Hill Maria house, and by many Bison-horn Marias. Jungle cock visit the *penda* plots and fight the domestic cocks in the early morning; the Hill Marias say that if a jungle cock crosses a domestic hen the eggs are not fertile.

[1] 'Hog' is used in its technical sense, of a gelded boar.
[2] See pp. 103 and 120.

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servants. Though the Bison-horn Marias are not free from either venereal disease or the visits of these gentry, yet they have been fairly successful in keeping their women to themselves, and have suffered little except in the south, where many of them go at times to Dummagudem and other Madras towns for work. If, however, the Telugus have given them venereal disease, they have more than repaid them with yaws. 164

Skin diseases, such as scabies, ringworm and eczema, are common, especially among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, who under Hindu influence are taking to the use of clothes. They cannot afford a change of clothing, and dispensary treatment is defeated at once if the old infected clothing cannot be discarded. Hill Marias wearing only scanty loin-cloths are far less affected; but even among them the 280 cases treated included 10 of scabies, 9 of ringworm and 7 of eczema. [177]

Eye complaints are frequent, owing largely, no doubt, to the habit of living and sleeping in dark unventilated huts and dormitories thick with smoke. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 16 of conjunctivitis, 5 of cataract, and 5 of other eye complaints.

Malaria is very common among the Bison-horn Marias, and in the Bijapur tahsil blackwater fever occurs. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 26 of malaria, only 4 of which were of children with badly enlarged spleens.

Old men and women are frequently seen crippled with rheumatism, and 17 of the 280 cases were of young men suffering from rheumatic complaints. Of the rest of the 280 cases, 24 were badly neglected ulcers, 6 bad foot-cracks, 25 simple stomach complaints, and 9 (including 3 of pyorrhoea) neuralgia from badly decayed teeth. No figures were kept of what is now the most obviously prevalent complaint, hydrocele, because it was impossible to treat this in camp. Glasfurd noted the prevalence of this in the sixties, and wrote in paragraph 66 of his Report that :—

> 'Hydrocele . . . is exceedingly common in the Chintulnar and Sonnkum (i.e. Sukma) Talooks, and also around Dantewara and in all parts, indeed, lying adjacent to the Bailla Deela range of hills. I should say that from 10 to 20 per cent. of the population in these parts are afflicted in this manner. Their own account of it is that it is caused by drinking the water of nullahs during the freshes.'

To me it now seems commoner in the Hill Maria country than elsewhere. The victims know no cure, and are only beginning to realise that something can be done for it in the dispensaries.

The idea that Marias are expert physicians is an amazing example of the general Hindu ignorance and superstitious dread of the aboriginal. In actual fact the Maria has only a few queer 757 752

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nostrums like the use of red-ants for fever or python-flesh for pot-belly already mentioned, and cauterization is the only treatment he knows for simple injuries or foot-crack (just as he brands the flanks of ailing cattle). A Maria bitten by a rabid dog at His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler's Christmas camp at Kondagaon in 1927 refused point blank to be sent out of Bastar to Raipur for Pasteur treatment, but ultimately as a concession to the general anxiety asked to be given the body of the dog, and ate its liver.[1] To Marias illness is generally a manifestation of something malignant, either the magic of a human enemy or the ill-will of a god or spirit. At funerals, steps are taken to ascertain whether magic was the cause of death; in illness a medium is called in, or a *wede* or *gunia* with knowledge either of spells to defeat the spirits of evil or of the white magic means of blowing away illness, *jhara phukna*; epidemic or epizootic disease may be defeated either by palisading the village after sweeping it clean, and posting guards with bows and arrows to shoot the demons of illness, as was done by Hill Marias in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, or by special disease-riddance ceremonies like the annual ceremony described on page 140. Yet such is the Hindu's faith in their 'medicine' that in 1930 the late zamindar of Sukma hastened his death when in the last stages of diabetes by taking the advice of Bison-horn Maria 'doctors' or *gunia* to the effect that he had two intestines, one of which had withered like a dead plant, while the other, though withering, was still partly green and could be revived if the patient fed it with lumps of black earth.

Maria treatment of disease

B. Manufactures

In the preceding chapters frequent mention has been made of basketry, for Maria measures, grain bins, walls of houses and fences, dancing shields and so on. The Hill Marias are great basket-workers, men and women. The men make all the big basketry bins for storing grain and the large baskets sold at the markets, as well as dancing shields and fencing and matting; the women make the basketry measures, basketry plates and the smaller domestic baskets, as well as brooms of various grasses, which are generally plaited together at the top by basketry methods. In camps, Hill Maria youths almost invariably employ any spare time in basket-making. Bison-horn Marias on the contrary leave it almost entirely to their women, except that the men make the basketry caps that are the basis of the *tallagulla* bison-horn dancing headdress, and fencing.

1. Basketry

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 421. - Analyst]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

755 To divine by chickens, the Gunia brings a chicken to the piles of rice and
781 tries to make it eat, asking it questions all the time. The point where the chicken eats is, of course, the answer to the question.

In matters of great moment and urgency, the Anga Deo from Bara Dongar may be sent for, but this is expensive and wastes a lot of time.

755 When a diagnosis has been made, steps must be taken to avert the evil. There are many different methods. The most common is the sacrifice of animals, rice, spices and smaller offerings. The village may be protected with bits of iron slag hammered into the doors of houses or round the borders. A scapegoat may be consecrated and driven away into the jungle. If a witch or warlock is discovered, he may be persuaded to undo the damage done. If the cause of disaster is some buried image or bone, it is essential that it should be found and properly destroyed. Often what is called in Hindi a *thua* is performed.

A *thua* is a ceremonial act based on the principles of contagious magic. It aims at concentrating the disease or danger in some material object which it then removes beyond the sphere within which a person can be affected: it takes the evil, for example, outside the village boundary, beyond the patient's *bhum*. Thus the Gunia may get a flea or a pubic hair from the patient, concentrate the disease in it and carry it away. Or to cure fever the Gunia takes one leaf-cup of cold and one of hot water and seven different kinds of flowers. He waves these seven times in front of the patient and throws them away.

A form of treatment recorded in Masora sounds like a combination of suggestion and prayer. To cure a headache on one side of the head, the patient should find a tree with cross-branches, go there on a Sunday, offer rice and pulse to the tree and bang his head seven times against it saying, 'O Mahapurub, be my friend today and drive away my pain'.

● 751 Medicines may be used, either alone or in association with magical means.
755 Some of the medicines are probably magical in origin, gaining their power
278 from some fancied resemblance to the thing to be cured, such as the prescription of the white milky sap of certain plants to promote lactation. I have recorded the following prescriptions:

For epilepsy. Take the feathers, and in some cases the flesh and bones, of a sparrow and offer them to whatever Rau or ghost is believed to be causing the trouble. At the time of an actual seizure, water in which the feathers have been dipped should be given to the sufferer.

For round-worms. The horn of a bison is scraped with a knife and the scrapings put in water which is allowed to stand for a time. When the water is drunk it is believed that the worms are either vomited or thrown out in the stool.

[833] *For impotence.* The genitalia of a bear are universally believed to be a cure for impotence, and Hindu subordinates and others try to obtain these from the Muria, who do not generally require them themselves. Another cure is to drink the powdered roots of the *tej-rāl* and *bhoj-rāl* plants in milk and abstain from intercourse for a week.

[753] *For dropsy.* This is usually regarded as a sign of the divine displeasure and is a punishment for adultery. It can be cured by the appropriate ceremonies described elsewhere. But the liver of a bear is also useful, if it is found that the disease is due to natural causes.

For venereal disease. This is almost unknown among the Muria. They sometimes confuse gonorrhoea with the burning urine caused by the heat of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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summer or the work of burning *dahi*, saying, 'O the summer has brought this burning for me'. They eat onions as a cure.

For pain in the stomach. The root of the arandi shrub, or the small green shoots of the babera tree.

For wounds. The bark of the mendla tree.

For rheumatism. There are several different remedies:

(1) Put some leaves of the kumi tree on the affected place and blow the pain away.

(2) Powder the roots of the karanji and sarpho plants. Mix with oil and rub it in.

(3) Touch the painful swelling with a bit of 'seed-iron' (*bij-loha*), or a thunderbolt.

For fever. The classic treatment is with red ants, which are sprinkled over the patient's body—the stings act as a counter-irritant. Sometimes, however, the ants are put in a pot of water, the lid is closed and the water is boiled for an hour. Then it is strained out and salt, chilli and garlic are mixed in it and it is given to the patient to drink. The residue of red ants is cleaned, ground up with salt and chilli and made into a chutney and given to the patient with his first food.

Another common febrifuge is to pound the leaves of the chill tree, and make a drink by mixing them with salt and chilli in water.

Red ants are also given as a cure for biliousness. A chutney of red ants, haldi and chilli is said to act very quickly on the stomach.

For headache.

(1) Pull each of your toes in turn. When you have found the toe that is connected with whatever part of the head is aching, tie it up and the pain will cease.

(2) Grind up the roots of makar and tikur with fresh haldi. Make a hot poultice of this and apply it to the head.

For diarrhoea. Take seven grains of rice and seven grains of urad pulse and the dry leaf of any old bamboo in the house. Grind them up together, boil in water, strain and take on an empty stomach.

For itch. Make an ointment of the white underskin of a snake and karanji oil.

For sores.

(1) Collect some harra fruit (myrabolams), dry and grind them to powder. Make a paste with a little oil, and apply to the sores.

(2) Remove the dirt from the patient's own ears, mix it in a paste of rice-flour and apply to the sores.

For the bite of a mad dog. Get a bit of the flesh of a mad dog which has died, dry it carefully and store it. When needed, it may be given mixed with gur not less than two years old.

Several different kinds of medicinal oil are made by the Muria. For cracked feet, and wounds in the ears of a bullock, they extract oil from the *dhaman* snake or the cobra. The fat is removed and melted in a pot and kept carefully in a small gourd. For rheumatism, oil made from the fatty parts of the tiger, the leopard or the bear is said to be effective.

X. Muria Festivals

Muria festivals are of several different kinds. The great Marhai are commercial festivals; in the larger Hinduized villages the old Pen Karsita or 'Sport of the Gods' has been turned into a large bazaar, at which the religious element